



Ivory bracelet, Sudan.

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# African and Caribbean Collections in Scottish Museums Scotland South

## Scotland South

- Abbotsford The Home of Sir Walter Scott (The Abbotsford Trust)
- Dumfries Museum (Dumfries and Galloway Council)
- Hawick Museum (Live Borders Museums, Galleries and Archives)
- Peebles Library, Museum and Gallery (Live Borders Museums, Galleries and Archives)

# Abbotsford The Home of Sir Walter Scott

## The Abbotsford Trust

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### Location of collections

Abbotsford House  
Melrose  
TD6 9BQ

### Size of collections

26 African objects  
No known Caribbean objects

### Selected objects

- Ceremonial knife, Democratic Republic of the Congo, T.AT.2349

### History of the Collection

Abbotsford was the home of 19th-century novelist and poet, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). Constructed from 1811 on the proceeds of Scott's literary career, the house and collection largely remain as Scott left them following his death. The African objects exhibited in the historic rooms at Abbotsford are mostly part of the personal collection that Scott amassed during his lifetime.

### Overview of the collection

The majority of objects are weaponry (functional and ceremonial) such as spears, bows, axes, daggers and knives and include examples from southern Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, northern Africa, and Ethiopia. Most are from southern Africa and include Zulu throwing spears (assegai) and a battle axe that is possibly Sotho. One of the most unusual items is a highly decorated knife from Democratic Republic of the Congo. The blade shape is typical of Salampasu knives, but the copper bindings and blade engravings are more typical of Tetela knives. This was most likely a high-status ceremonial weapon. Most of these objects probably date to the first half of the 19th century. Scott never travelled to Africa or wrote about Africa, and these objects were probably obtained through gift or purchase for his armoury display.

Scott never inventoried his collection, and the contents of the Armoury have limited provenance details in comparison with other types of objects in the Abbotsford collections. It is possible that some of the southern African material was donated by Thomas Pringle (1789-1834), a poet and abolitionist originally from Kelso. Scott was a friend of Pringle and helped him to secure a free passage and British Government resettlement offer of land in South Africa, where Pringle emigrated in 1820. Correspondence suggests that he sent animal horns to Scott in 1822 and 1826, although no mention of other objects has been identified. Scottish poet and linguist John Leyden is another potential candidate for sourcing objects. A copy of his 1799 publication *A Historical and Philosophical Sketch of the*

*Discoveries and Settlements of the Europeans in Northern and Western Africa, at the Close of the Eighteenth Century* is preserved in Scott's Library.

### Areas for further research

Scott's writing and letters sometimes mention particular objects. To date, no African objects have been identified this way, but further research could be directed towards his large correspondence collections. The National Library of Scotland holds 10,000 of Scott's letters and Edinburgh University Library has an online resource designed around their extensive Corson Collection of Walter Scott material.

Additional information may be found in *Reliquiae Troscosienses or the Gabions of the late Jonathan Oldbuck Esq of Monkbarns*, a fictionalised account of an antiquary's house and collection, based on Abbotsford and written by Scott towards the end of his life. Two other potential sources were written in the late 1800s by Scott's granddaughter, Mary Monica Maxwell Scott: *Abbotsford. The Personal Relics and Antiquarian Treasures of Sir Walter Scott* (1893) and *Catalogue of the Armour & Antiquities at Abbotsford* (1897). The catalogue corresponds to numbered copper tags on some of the objects, although no relevant information was identified from these during this review. Objects from the collection can also be found in the Magnum Opus notes to Scott's Waverley Novels.

At one time, the Scott family held correspondence about items of armoury sent to Walter Scott by Thomas Pringle, but these were recorded as lost when the Abbotsford Trust was established. These documents may be found with further work on the extensive archive at Abbotsford.

### Regions and countries represented: Africa

Region/country	Major Sources	Collection size estimate	Types of material
<b>Africa unspecified</b>	Walter Scott	<b>3</b>	Dagger, knife, spear
<b>Northern Africa</b>		<b>4</b>	
Northern Africa unspecified	Walter Scott	3	Gourd flask, knife, powder horn
Egypt	Walter Scott	1	Pair of earrings
<b>Eastern Africa</b>		<b>1</b>	
Ethiopia	Walter Scott	1	Spear
<b>Central Africa</b>		<b>1</b>	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Walter Scott	1	Knife
<b>Southern Africa</b>		<b>17</b>	
Southern Africa unspecified	Water Scott	17	Battle axe, long bow, throwing spears

## Published Information

Maxwell-Scott, Mary Monica (1893). *Abbotsford. The Personal Relics and Antiquarian Treasures of Sir Walter Scott*. London: Adam and Charles Black.

Maxwell-Scott, Mary Monica (1897). *Catalogue of the Armour & Antiquities at Abbotsford*. Printed by T and A Constable at the Edinburgh University Press.

## Selected object images

Ceremonial knife, Democratic Republic of the Congo, T.AT.2349



# Dumfries Museum

## Dumfries and Galloway Council

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### Location of collections

Dumfries Museum and Camera Obscura  
The Observatory  
Rotchell Road  
Dumfries  
DG2 7SW

### Size of collections

68 African objects  
4 Caribbean objects

### Online collections

<https://www.dgculture.co.uk/collections>

### Selected objects

#### ***Africa***

- Beadwork encasing a mirror, South Africa, DUMFM:1964.150.34
- Hide and bead 'apron', South Africa, DUMFM:1967.155
- Pot, Tanzania, DUMFM:1966.119
- Headrest, Zimbabwe, DUMFM:1964.139.29
- Axe, Zimbabwe, DUMFM:1967.491

#### ***Caribbean***

- Calabash cup, Guyana, DUMFM:1974.156.4.3

### History of the collection

Dumfries Museum started life in 1835 when the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Astronomical Society purchased the current site, a derelict windmill tower, and converted it into an observatory with a telescope and camera obscura. Members began to donate 'antiquities, curiosities and by-gones' and in 1862 the Main Hall was constructed as an extension to accommodate the growing collections. In November 1862, The Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society was formed and collected a large body of historical material which was exhibited in the extended space. A historical inventory of Scottish museum holdings from 1888 lists the 'Museum in Maxwellton [sic], Dumfries' as holding African items. By the early 1930s the Astronomical Society's finances were failing and the Town Council of Dumfries acquired the building and grounds with the agreement of financing what became the Dumfries Burgh Museum. At this point much of the non-local material in the collection was dispersed. In 1948, Alfred E Truckell was appointed Curator and took an active interest in building up the non-European material once again. Truckell acquired

material from other museums and local house sales, including the Royal Scottish Museum (now National Museums Scotland), Stranraer Museum, Langholm Museum and Dr T B Grierson's Museum in Thornhill. Much of the African material is likely to be from these transfers and could potentially date to the mid nineteenth century. Dr Grierson's Museum, for example, was a private collection built up from 1842 and opened to the public in 1872.

## **Overview of the collection**

### ***Africa***

At present, 68 items can be identified as African. This review was based on a working inventory and a visual survey, and it is possible that around 20 additional objects could be identified with further auditing. Multiple historical numbering systems are currently listed in the inventory and staff are working on matching objects with accession numbers, identifying duplicate records, and locating unnumbered objects in the store. Around 28% of the objects currently identified as African are not currently attributed to a country or region; around 21% are from southern Africa; 19% are from western Africa; 15% are from eastern Africa; 10% are from northern Africa; and 7% are from central Africa.

Highlights of the collection include a Shona headrest and axe from Zimbabwe, South African beadwork items including a beaded mirror and hide 'apron', black earthenware pots from Tanzania, and ceremonial paddles from Nigeria. Records suggest that the headrest possibly came from Stranraer Museum and may previously have belonged to John Dalrymple, 10th Earl of Stair. The Tanzanian pots were transferred from the Langholm Museum Collection, and historic labels suggest they were donated by Dr Gibb. Some of the South African beadwork was acquired from the Royal Scottish Museum and the sale of Marchfield House in Dumfries. Marchfield House was built by the Houston family, who are listed as members of the Black Watch regiment. The Black Watch was active in the South African War (1899-1902), and it is possible that material dates from this conflict.

Staff at National Museums Scotland have conducted some research into a necklace and armband from Equatorial Guinea, which were transferred from the Royal Scottish Museum in the 1960s. They suggest that the donor was probably Dr Archibald Hewan (1832-1883), the Jamaican botanist/ missionary doctor, who made donations in 1859 and is known to have made a collecting trip to Bioko.

### ***Caribbean***

Dumfries Museum holds a calabash cup and two silver-coloured vases believed to have belonged to James Dalgleish Patterson (1775-1842). He travelled to Demerara, Guyana, in 1806 and was a key figure in the development of the export trade in timber. He was associated with plantation Christianburg and several other estates. He appears in British parliamentary papers following the abolition of slavery as a claimant for 322 enslaved people. The calabash cup and two silver vases were probably owned by Dalgleish Patterson in Guyana. The calabash cup is engraved with his initials. The Museum also holds a stone axe from the West Indies, transferred from the Royal Scottish Museum.

## **Associated material**

The museum is currently displaying a set of cylindrical clay beads, decorated with gold paint and lines of molten glass, probably made in Venice. Beads of this type were reportedly used to barter for enslaved people on the west coast of Africa in the 1780s. There are examples of merchants, ship's captains and crews from Dumfries and Galloway moving to Liverpool

where they organised and participated in the traffic of enslaved people. These beads came from Langholm Museum, and may have belonged to James Irving, a ship's captain active in the traffic of enslaved people from Liverpool.

Dumfries Museum also holds notable historical documents and objects pertaining to the activity of local people in the Caribbean. These include a Plantation Account Book (1771-1776) most likely from the Tait's Concordia Plantation on Tobago. There are also several items associated with the Denholm-Young family and Samuel Denholm-Young (1777-1854) who had links to Antigua, including seven oil paintings, one George III table, and a ceremonial staff, believed to be Rod of Office of the Governor of Antigua.

### **Areas for further research**

The entire African collection would benefit from further research and auditing. If objects could be matched with historical records, this might provide avenues for donor and provenance research. Some information may be found in the historical 'X registers' at National Museums Scotland for the objects transferred from the Royal Scottish Museum. For example, one cowhide fan from the Niger region (DUMFM:1967.157/X104) is recorded at National Museums Scotland as coming from the 'Astley collection', which may refer to Harriet Astley, the daughter of a Liverpool ship's captain who participated in the transatlantic slave trade. Her husband's collection was auctioned in 1861, and African objects were purchased by the Royal Scottish Museum.

The Caribbean collection, especially associated material, may provide research potential for better understanding the role and activities of people from Dumfries and Galloway in the Caribbean from the 1770s. James Dalgleish Patterson has received some attention from historian David Alston which can be found online:

<https://www.spanglefish.com/slavesandhighlanders/index.asp?pageid=299595>

Dumfries and Galloway Council is also responsible for Stranraer Museum and The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright. Representatives of these museums report that The Stewartry Museum (established in the 1880s) underwent a 'rationalisation' of non-British collections in 1955 and material was potentially transferred to museums in Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is also possible that material from both museums was transferred to Dumfries Museum. No known African or Caribbean material remains in either collection apart from a partial set of skeletal human remains at Stranraer Museum, noted later in the report. These historic transfers may provide research leads for material in other collections.

### **Human remains**

Dumfries Museum holds a partial set of skeletal human remains from one individual from South Africa. Historical museum records suggest that this person was Xhosa and that their remains were brought from South Africa in the 1880s, either by Mr W Johnstone of Grahamstown or by Mr Ferguson of the Cape, originally to Dr T B Grierson's Museum in Thornhill.

Stranraer Museum reports that they hold a partial set of skeletal human remains from one individual from South Africa. Historical museum records suggest that this person was San and that their remains entered the Museum in the 1950s as part of a larger transfer from the Earl of Stair or Anderson collections.



## Regions and countries represented: Africa

Region/country	Major sources	Collection size estimate	Types of material
<b>Africa unspecified</b>		<b>19</b>	
	Mrs Elder Dr & Mrs MacKenzie		Armlets, basket, bow, bracelet, brush, carved figure (made for tourists), comb, drum, earrings, gourd vessel, hat, ladle, neck rings, snuff bottle, staff/stick, whip
<b>Northern Africa</b>		<b>7</b>	
Northern Africa unspecified		4	Dagger, head ornament, skull cap, sword scabbard
Algeria		1	Spoon
Sudan		2	Leather pouch, leather writing case
<b>Eastern Africa</b>		<b>10</b>	
Eastern Africa unspecified		4	Axes
United Republic of Tanzania	Dr Gibb	3	Pots
Zimbabwe		3	Axes, headrest
<b>Central Africa</b>		<b>5</b>	
Central Africa unspecified		3	Axe, bracelets, powder horn
Equatorial Guinea	Royal Scottish Museum	2	Armlet, necklace
<b>Southern Africa</b>		<b>14</b>	
Southern Africa unspecified	Royal Scottish Museum	6	Beadwork: necklets, pouches, purses, knobkerrie
Lesotho	Royal Scottish Museum	1	Basket
South Africa	Royal Scottish Museum. Marchfield House Collection. Mr McKay.	7	Arrows, beadwork mirror, beadwork necklet, leatherwork apron, quiver, shield, spoons
<b>Western Africa</b>		<b>13</b>	
Western Africa unspecified	Royal Scottish Museum	5	Fan, gourd bowl, knife, necklace, manilla
Nigeria		7	Fibre pouch, paddles
Sierra Leone		1	Kissi penny currency

## Regions and countries represented: Caribbean

Country		Collection size estimate	Types of material
West Indies unspecified	Royal Scottish Museum	1	Stone axe
Guyana	Mrs Hyslop	3	Calabash cup, two white metal vases

## Published Information

Truckell, Alfred (1992). Addenda Antiquaria: Some 18th Century Transatlantic Trade Documents. *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* 67: 86-88.

Wilkins, Frances (2007). *Dumfries and Galloway and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Kidderminster: Wyre Forest Press.

Wilkins, Frances (2013). *A History of Dumfries and Galloway in 100 Documents Part 2*. Kidderminster: Wyre Forest Press, 26-48.

Information on some objects and donors: <http://www.futuremuseum.co.uk/collections.aspx>

Historical lists: [archiveDownload \(archaeologydataservice.ac.uk\)](http://archiveDownload.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk) p82.

## Selected object images

Beadwork encasing a mirror, South Africa, DUMFM:1964.150.34



Hide and bead 'apron', South Africa, DUMFM:1967.155



Pot, Tanzania, DUMFM:1966.119



Headrest, Zimbabwe, DUMFM:1964.139.29



Axe, Zimbabwe, DUMFM:1967.491



Calabash cup, Guyana, DUMFM:1974.156.4.3



# Hawick Museum

## Live Borders Museums, Galleries and Archives

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### Location of collections

Hawick Museum  
Wilton Lodge Park  
Hawick  
TD9 7JL

### Size of collections

55 African objects  
No known Caribbean objects

### Selected objects

- Carved and painted wooden stool, Somalia, HAKMG: 9117
- Throwing knife, Sudan, HAKMG: 8765
- Ivory bracelet, Sudan, HAK.20.0052
- Comb, Africa unspecified, HAK.20.0062

### History of the collection

Hawick Museum, located in an 18th-century mansion house in Wilton Lodge Park, opened in 1910. The collection was founded by the Hawick Archaeological Society, formed in 1856.

### Overview of the collection

Around 70% of the African objects held at Hawick are not currently attributed to a particular region or country; around 11% are from northern Africa; 7% are from eastern Africa; 7% are from southern Africa; and 5% are from western Africa. It is likely that northeastern Africa is better represented than current figures suggest, but a more accurate characterisation of the collection has not been possible within the timeframe of this project.

Identifiable objects include three throwing knives (eg HAKMG: 8765) and an ivory bracelet (HAK.20.0052) from Sudan, a brass Coptic cross from Ethiopia, and earrings from Egypt. Historical records suggest that a Lord Rosebery donated over 30 objects from present day Somalia, although it has only been possible to identify four in the current collection: a peaked saddle, sandals, a stool (HAKMG: 9117) and a mat. This was most likely Harry Primrose, 6th Earl of Rosebery (1882-1974) who served with the Grenadier Guards in former British Somaliland, 1901-1904.

The collection also contains several ivory armbands, snuff or scent containers, combs, daggers and axes. One comb (HAK.20.0062) still carries a historical museum label that suggests it was donated by a James Wilson of the Royal Navy Engineers.

### Notable Donors

Harry Primrose, 6th Earl of Rosebery (1882-1974)

## Areas for further research

The African objects identified in this review are what remains of the historic collections accumulated by the Hawick Archaeological Society. Many others were probably transferred to National Museums Scotland in the late 1950s to early 1960s. Although no records of these deaccessions are held in Hawick Museum, information may be found in accession registers at National Museums Scotland. Much of the Hawick collection would have been donated by landed gentry and local businessmen who travelled for trade. Possible avenues for future research include notes of accessions in transactions published by the Archaeological Society and the accession book from 1910. More Somalian objects may be identified from Lord Rosebery's donation list, published in *Transactions of Hawick Archaeological Society, 1903* (January meeting, p3), a publication held at the Museum.

## Regions and countries represented: Africa

Region/country	Major sources	Collection size estimate	Types of material
<b>Africa unspecified</b>		<b>38</b>	
	Mrs Macleay James Wilson		Armlets, axe, basket, bottle, combs, daggers, embroidered quills, flywhisk, gourd container, ivory armlets, necklaces, scent bottles, shisha pipe, snuff spoons, spindles, stool, swords
<b>Northern Africa</b>		<b>6</b>	
Northern Africa unspecified		1	Mat
Egypt	Rev W A P Johnman	1	Earrings
Sudan	Mrs Macleay	4	Knives, bracelet
<b>Eastern Africa</b>		<b>4</b>	
Ethiopia		1	Coptic cross
Somalia	Lord Rosebery	3	Mat, peaked saddle, sandals, stool
<b>Southern Africa</b>		<b>4</b>	
Southern Africa unspecified		1	Knife
South Africa	Mrs Macleay	3	Combs
<b>Western Africa</b>		<b>3</b>	
Western Africa unspecified		3	Drum, horn, stool

**Selected object images**

Carved and painted wooden stool, Somalia, HAKMG: 9117





Throwing knife, Sudan, HAKMG: 8765



Ivory bracelet, Sudan, HAK.20.0052



Comb, Africa unspecified, HAK.20.0062



African Laying Comb  
Presented  
by  
James Nelson King  
Esq. of  
Lagos, N. W. I.  
1857

African Laying Comb

# Peebles Library, Museum and Gallery

## Live Borders Museums, Galleries and Archives

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### Location of collections

Peebles Library, Museum and Gallery  
Chambers Institution  
High Street  
Peebles  
EH45 8AG

### Size of collections

28 African objects  
No known Carribean objects

### Selected objects

- Throwing knife, Democratic Republic of the Congo, PEEBM:05295
- Ivory armet, Sudan, PEEBM:05365
- Harp, Democratic Republic of the Congo, PEEBM:07147

### History of the collection

The Museum, located in the Chambers Institute which was remodelled with the bequest of locally-born publisher William Chambers (1800-1883), opened in 1859 to provide a library, museum and hall for the Peebles community. An extension funded by Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) opened in 1912.

### Overview of the collection

Current records suggest that around 21% of the entire African collection is from northern Africa, 11% is from eastern Africa, 11% from central Africa, 11% from western Africa, and 3% from southern Africa. Around 43% of the collection is not currently attributed to a country or region.

Objects of interest include two ceremonial paddles and a Hausa dagger from Nigeria, and a throwing knife and sword recorded as being collected in Democratic Republic of Congo. An ivory armet, probably from southern Sudan, is recorded as Shilluk from the 'White Nile'. The donor of the armet is recorded as 'Master of Elibank' which may refer to Alexander William Charles Oliphant Murray, 1st Baron Murray of Elibank (1870 -1920). Although no direct link to southern Sudan has been identified, Murray did visit present day Botswana, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Maputo Bay following the South African War (1899-1902). The collection also contains a mask recorded as Tanzanian and a Mangbetu style harp from Democratic Republic of Congo, which were most likely made for sale to Europeans.

### Notable donors

Alexander William Charles Oliphant Murray, 1st Baron Murray of Elibank (1870 -1920)

### Areas for further research

Nearly half of the African collection is currently unattributed to a region or country and visual surveys and archival research may provide more information about these objects. Of the material that is attributed, northern African material makes up a large percentage and for this reason would particularly benefit from further research. The Museum holds historic registers, catalogues and minute books, dating back to 1859, which could provide a starting point for future investigations.

### Regions and countries represented: Africa

Region/country	Major sources	Collection size estimate	Types of material
<b>Africa unspecified</b>		<b>12</b>	Axe, drum, knife, necklet, shield, spear
<b>Northern Africa</b>		<b>6</b>	
Egypt		1	Pipe
Sudan	Mr Forrest Master of Elibank	5	Armlet, axe, knife, tray
<b>Eastern Africa</b>		<b>3</b>	
Eastern Africa unspecified		2	Spear
United Republic of Tanzania	J Fisher	1	Mask
<b>Central Africa</b>		<b>3</b>	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mrs E Turner	3	Harp, knife, sword
<b>Southern Africa</b>		<b>1</b>	
Southern Africa unspecified		1	Axe
<b>Western Africa</b>		<b>3</b>	
Nigeria		3	Dagger, ceremonial paddles

## Selected object images

Throwing knife, Democratic Republic of the Congo, PEEBM:05295



Ivory armband, Sudan, PEEBM:05365



Harp, Democratic Republic of the Congo, PEEBM:07147

